

*The Formation and Early Development of the English and British Cultural
Identities*

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In the words of Monika Otter, “the date is so memorable that the number 1066 itself can stand on its own, metonymically implying the Battle of Hastings, the accession of William to the English throne, the Norman Conquest, the end of Anglo-Saxon culture, the realignment of England in the geopolitical and cultural map of Europe from ‘Scandinavian’ to ‘French,’ and the linguistic transition from ‘Old’ to ‘Middle’ English” [43 p565]. Such is the viewpoint of many modern scholars, and it has been so for centuries. Though the changes and shifts of that period were not all constrained to a single year, it is considered by many to be the starting point of modern English history, a thick line dividing Old English from England as we now know it. The hypothesis which was explored and affirmed by this project, however, was that 1066 itself and the following events did not form a the standalone foundation for the English identity, for even the entirety of the Norman Conquest was neither uniquely significant, nor truly the beginning of British cultural development. The Conquest was a notable event in British history, but also merely another stage in the process of cultural formation which had begun with the island’s first lasting society. And because the Norman Conquest was not in fact the ending of Anglo-Saxon culture in Britain, nor a conclusion to any of the previous cultures, it is important to look further back in British history when considering the factors which led to the modern English identity.

The year 1066 certainly held some importance as a step toward the creation of English culture, and that importance is explored in this body of research. However, it is important to

convey the limits of that single period. Far too many histories of England dismiss the times before the Conquest or antecedent factors that allowed for the influence of 1066. In lieu of focusing solely on one date, this paper also discusses the relative importance of the island's prehistoric conditions and societies, the influence of Britain's Celtic era, the Roman occupation and the introduction of Latin, the years following the exodus of Rome and the German conquest of England, and the events leading up to Norman rule. This paper examines the many cultural traits adopted during each historical period and the ways in which those traits continued and continue to influence the British (and particularly English) identities long past the apparent fall of each society.

Methods, Categorization, and Summary

To give some detail to the segments of this paper and aforementioned eras in English history, they will be defined as follows: Pre-Celtic Britain began with the first continuous human inhabitation of the island, which appeared around 8,000 B.C.E.. The first definable group of peoples who seemed to have endured to influence the later inhabitants were then Neolithic farmers who lived in Britain from 4,000 B.C.E. [1; 23; 24]. These Neolithic societies were defined by the climate and resources of the land on which they lived, and the importance of Britain's geography was echoed throughout the millennia that followed [1; 7 p1-3; 24]. Celtic origins in England and throughout Britain began around the sixth or fifth century B.C.E., during the Hallstatt period of the Celts [5]. In this time, the Celts spread with their use of ironworking from central to western Europe and the southern part of Britain, and brought their culture of trade, warfare, and strong oral traditions with them [5; 13, 27].

Towards the end of the Iron age, in 55 B.C.E., came the first Roman invasion of Britain, introducing a second major cultural presence to trace [1; 9; 18 p43-5]. The Romans failed in this first attempt, after establishing a foothold, but returned under Emperor Claudius in A.D. 43 and eventually exercised control over southern Britain and brought with them the use of Latin and closer ties to the continent [2; 5 p96-99; 19]. The collapse of the Roman Empire then brought Germanic tribes a-viking from Denmark and the low countries around A.D. 449 [18 p45; 20]. The Germanic tribes of Jutes, Angles, and Saxons conquered what had been Roman Britain and founded a government over a united England while also instilling in British society their other cultural values and characteristics, including what became the Old English language [6 p8; 18 p45-67; 20; 21]. Finally, after a brief period of rule by the Danish and interactions with Normandy under Edward the Confessor, the Norman Conquest began in 1066 [7 p24; 20; 22]. William the Conqueror sailed from Normandy in this year to subdue England and tether it to the continent, thus setting the point which is commonly held as modern England's defining beginning [18 p108; 20; 22].

With the historical periods so categorized, the concept of culture and identity must be defined and refined for the sake of this study. Taken generally, defining culture as the arts and all manifestation of human intellect and interaction within a society would provide a wide and nearly infinite expanse of study. And so, due also to the scarcity of reliable historical accounts, the cultural aspects that are compared in this paper are focused around major societal and institutional constructs; linguistic, literary, and religious developments; and some technological characteristics; as well as various factors that contemporary sources deemed especially notable.

Finally, it should be stated that the purpose and significance of this study lies not in simply the synthesis of secondary sources. Rather, this paper intends to use both firsthand and secondary accounts to examine and present a fresh perspective on the lasting cultural significance of different periods in early English history. It seeks to shift the focus from the year 1066 as the beginning of modern England and instead give insight into how and why each of many collective events were able to influence the course of England's rich cultural heritage.

Pre-Celtic and Geographic Setting

The first traces of culture in Britain must lie with its original inhabitants, yet no firsthand accounts of these peoples exist. Neither they, nor the Celtic peoples that followed, possessed or utilized a written language, and so evidence of their culture or identity as separate from the Celtic peoples is scarce. Given this, the body of this research will only briefly address the few distinguishable or inferred characteristics of the earliest cultures and inhabitants of Britain, as well as the conditions shaping settlement, before commencing with a focus on the Celtic era of British history.

Based on archaeological findings, humans may have first lived in Britain as many as 700,000 years ago, during a period when the landmass was peninsular rather than an island [24]. Human remains have been found from as far back as 500,000 years ago, but correlation between flint artifacts found in Somerset and the evolution of contemporary vole remains indicate a potentially earlier presence, and a preserved flint handaxe found on the coast has been controversially dated around 700,000 B.C.E. [23]. Regardless, for over half a million years following the first inhabitation, humans struggled to survive in Britain's often extreme climate, though intermittently, suggesting that the cold eras often proved too much to bear [24]. Intensive studies done by the recent Ancient Human Occupation of Britain project, which helped analyze the aforementioned dating, show that on at least seven different occasions humans appeared and died out in Britain, with no apparent continuity between the populations. It is only in the last 60,000 years that there is evidence of more frequent return to Britain, and an especially severe freezing period cut off human population for several thousand years until around 11,000 B.C.E. [23]. The dating of this population is not exact either, though estimates vary within only a couple

thousand years, and evidence of continuous human presence dates to around 10,000-8,000 B.C.E. [23; 24].

This most recent period then forms the basis of the earliest ancestry of modern British peoples, and though immigration in various forms has changed the concentration of the population, regional physical stereotypes that have persisted since ancient accounts indicate that “native” British roots may reach back as far as the Neolithic farmers of 4,000 B.C.E. [24; 1; 2]. Traces have been found of human settlements in Scotland 2,000 years prior, but these populations were largely hunters and fishers, and not necessarily as well established or enduring [2]. The neolithic peoples, in contrast, left remains of stone villages and chambered tombs. These ruins show the presence of sophisticated and cooperative building and a settled society. The Beaker folk came after, bringing their distinctive pottery and stone circles, now seen throughout Britain. During the Bronze Age in Britain, ending around 600 B.C.E., metal technologies were introduced in the forms of tools, weapons, and implements from buckles to buckets. These further suggest a more complex level of civilization by the indigenous people of northern Scotland who were later labelled as the Picts. Though the Celts are distinguished from the Picts in their heritage and later arrival to the island, by the time the Romans arrived, the two sets of peoples had mixed too closely to completely determine independent cultural characteristics within Britain [9].

While not a focus of this research, it deserves mention that the genetic origins of the British peoples also may reach into this pre-Celtic era. According to historian Dr. Simon James, the modern physical stereotypes of people from different parts of the island, such as red-haired northerners, lanky blond southerners, and small dark-haired Welsh, were found in Roman times,

thus not resulting from the Anglo-Saxon and Viking invasions [1]. This point is supported by the Roman historian Tacitus' description of the northern Caledonian peoples his father-in-law encountered as having "red hair and large limbs," while the Silures- who lived in what is now Wales- were often darker, and the peoples on the south of the island resembled the Gauls [15]. Simon James extrapolates that these characteristics may then reach back as far as the Neolithic farmers as well [1]. From this evidence, he concludes that the basis of the British peoples and identity were formed long before the British iron age. [1]. While the scope of this particular research encompasses more cultural changes than examined by Dr. James, it remains significant that some genetic basis of Britain's modern inhabitants may date back to these populations preceding the Celtic era.

Another important factor in forming British culture which must be addressed before the body of focused periods is the nature of the island itself. Even as Scotland, England, and Wales have long existed as separate entities prior to the state of the United Kingdom, prehistoric peoples settled into cultures often split by the regions of the British landscape [7 p1-5]. As far back as the first failed human settlement on the peninsula 500,000 years ago, climate has dictated the terms of human survival, and the existence of separate identities grouped by geography even in Caesar's accounts attests to the importance of Britain's environment [24; 9]. In the words of British historian Jeremy Black MBE, "the long and complex history of the British Isles reflects the interaction of man and a very varied natural environment" [7 p1]. It is no stretch at all to see how the geographic niche in which a population settles can cause cultures to differentiate themselves and build identities and customs based on that niche. The "very varied natural environment" of the island then helped allow for so many different cultures to grow up and

coexist [7 p1]. A separation by region then made possible both the preservation of cultures and continued exchange that characterizes the history of Britain. In a way, this environmental effect is then what makes the numerous periods of invasion and exchange so important in the formation of the English identity. Not only did various identities throughout Britain distinguish themselves in part based on their environment, but the natural boundaries dividing the island kept more cultures alive by delaying the complete conquest by any single invader [7, p4-5]. When the Romans first arrived, the Celtic peoples spread out into Wales and the never-conquered north, and when the Normans came, the Britons moved further west of the March while the Scottish kept up a fierce resistance [7 p4, 38-39; 9]. Thus, though the new powers on the island carved a place for themselves, the prior cultures either survived through isolation or coexistence. The conglomerate nature of British identities, and the importance of multiple interactions instead of singly that of the Norman invasion, is neither solely due to the island's geography or climate, nor the sole result of these, but it is a key connection.

The climates and geographical features of Britain vary throughout the island, with the environmental conditions affecting the quality and style of life in each region. The south and east areas of Britain, for example, are lower and warmer, with fertile soils and flat land, more suitable for agricultural use [2; 7 p1; 28]. This region has long been one of the most prosperous and powerful, as well as wealthy and generally peaceful since the time of the Romans [2; 7 p1]. Northern England and Scotland, by contrast, are hilly and wet, with acidic and rocky soil made worse by the heavy rains washing away topsoil [2; 7 p2; 9; 28]. The terrain and soil make the regions unsuitable for crop cultivation, and so the agricultural economies have historically been based on grazing instead [7 p1]. Having only an animal based system for sustenance and limited

natural resources for exploitation meant that the regions were unable to host large populations or generate as much economic activity [7 p2]. Wales and the western portions of England were constrained in populations growth and wealth by similar conditions of hilly landscape with poorer soil, but they were home to rich mineral and ore deposits [2; 7 p2]. Western Britain was coveted by invaders for its resources, and thus more dearly contested [2]. Coastal locales in Wales and northern Scotland were often stark contrasts to their inland neighbors, due to a wealth of resources and close proximity to trade routes, and so became centers of political and economic activity [7 p2].

Geography and agriculture and agrarian systems therefore heavily impacted power structures and the distribution of influence in the British Isles. Coins and early forms of states were found in Pre-Roman England, but limited populations and resources meant greater limits on support from taxation and the power of governing systems in the north and west [7 p2]. Trade was also affected by this lack of wealth, as throughout the Iron Age trade expanded and luxuries such as pottery from far off parts of the continent have been found at Celtic British sites [5 p18, 28]. Though this trade was not restricted to the coastal areas, most of inland Wales, a poorer area because of its terrain and limited agriculture, left no remains of any sort of pottery or similar goods [5 p18, 28; 7 p2]. In addition to the benefits of wealth in flatter and richer agricultural regions, the island's topography affected British history in its barriers to invaders [7, p4; 9; 28]. Few resources to promote settlement meant a lack of incentive for invasion of the north, and the mountainous terrain of Scotland provided a natural wall to assist the region's defense [2; 4; 7 p4; 9]. It is arguably due to the natural defense of topography that Scotland and Wales have better

maintained their cultural identities and more fully preserved traces of previous inhabitants throughout history [4; 28].

In addition to the topographic and natural defenses, the same factors which prevented the accumulation of wealth and the building of single governing states may have helped cultivate the fierceness of the inhabitants of northern and western regions which allowed them to keep their cultural identities. With limited resources from which to build, settling was more difficult, whereas the areas of wealth were known for being peaceful and more placid [2; 9]. For example, with more abundant natural environs and less contest over scarcity, Tacitus both noted that Gaul had become more settled and was more easily subjugated in his time than Britain, where the tribes were constantly warring [15]. When invaders crossed into Wales and Scotland, they noted that the wealthier regions of England had been associated with reduced resistance, and the reverse of this correlation has also proven true [9]. As is further discussed in later sections of this paper, states were more easily built in the agriculturally rich regions, whereas the areas where cultivation was difficult were split by warring tribes [4; 9]. The Scottish highlands were a safe haven for fugitives and a birthplace of rebellions, while the hills of Wales were the last area to join under a single rule [3; 7 p36-38; 9; 18 p43]. The lack of uniformity of British peoples and cultures reflected the physical variety of their landscape [7 p4-5]. Again, this also contributes to the need for a thorough examination of multiple peoples and cultural interactions in order to truly understand the British identities.

The Celts

The first people in Britain of whom we have contemporary written accounts, the Celts, came to the island as a part of their expansion during the Iron Age [5 p8-15]. While they did not replace the previous inhabitants, the Celtic peoples conquered or infiltrated the lands they arrived in via trade and technologies, eventually transforming the cultures with their own [10]. The Paleolithic and Neolithic peoples of Britain, like many elsewhere who came into contact with immigrating Celts, had Celtic languages, customs, arts, and technologies imposed on them, with the Celts eventually forming their ruling class either via conquest or often peaceful transition into the society.

For centuries, the Celtic peoples controlled much of central and western Europe, originating near the Rhine Valley and leaving marks of their influence from northwestern Spain and Ireland to Galatia in modern day Turkey (5 p8, 15, 27; 16). Celtic traditions and languages still have their place in Brittany and Ireland, as well as notably Scotland and Wales, despite multiple Roman, Viking, and French incursions into Britain in subsequent ages (5 p8). Celtic culture even today is known for some of the characteristic elements that defined it to Roman eyes at the time of their conflicts. These elements include: the technological development of the Hallstatt and then La Tène cultures and the resulting art and artifacts; trade interactions across the vast reach of the tribal culture; the languages of the Italo-Celtic family from Indo-European roots; a distinct and deeply-rooted tradition of folklore and legends which even transferred into their religious approaches; and a fierce tribal societal structure based on merit in battle and characterized by vigor rather than discipline in war (5 p8-9, 34-35; 16)

The Celtic tribes who arrived in Britain originally came from the Rhine Valley and the area around modern day Austria and Germany [5 p12-13]. The Romans who first encountered the Celts in Britain realized their origins, with Caesar's account describing them as "those who had passed from the country of Belgae for the purpose of plunder and making war... And having waged war, continued there and began to cultivate the lands" [9]. The Hallstatt Celts who first settled in Britain had spread throughout the 8th to 5th centuries B.C.E., crossing central Europe and moving west through France and across Brittany into southern England and Wales [5 p12-13]. The latter part of this movement took place especially in the 6th and 5th centuries, as they repopulated the northern half of France, which had been depopulated from earlier migrations, and then crossed the channel into England, eventually moving through Wales on to Ireland [p13]. The Celts brought with them and were identified by their ironworking capabilities and techniques [p13].

As discussed before, the peoples encountered in Britain in Roman times and now trace back ancestrally to at least the era of the Celts, if not earlier [1]. However, we have been able to gain some picture of the ethnic Celts of the regions themselves, based on Roman sources describing the Gauls with whom the southern British Celts were remarked to share the same physical traits [10]. According to Dr. Rice Holmes, corroborated by early Roman accounts, the antiquities who had contact with the Celts described them as a "tall air race, warlike and masterful," with [10; 9; 15]. The Celtic peoples were described almost exactly as the Germans had been, and were in fact considered associated with Germanic tribes by the Roman scholars [9; 10; 15]. There also exists some evidence that at least some of the southern peoples of Britain were genetically Celtic instead of merely culturally, as the tribes described by the ancients shared

these characteristics, which were also found in certain areas of Italy where the Celtic cultures and peoples were known to have traveled [10]. The Celts of Britain were often noted to have red hair when fair, and even when darker in complexion and with reddish tints often underlying brown or black hair [10]. The origins of this trait have been loosely traced to the Danube [10]. Tacitus, in addition to connecting the red haired and lanky Caledonians of modern Scotland to Germanic tribes, recognized that the shared physical and cultural traits of the southern Britons and the Gauls likely came first from the Gauls and their initial origins. An interesting point explored by Tacitus is the similarity between the Silures, Celtic peoples of Wales, and the Iberians. Tacitus specifically described the dark complexions and curly hair of the Silures as possible evidence of their origins on the Iberian peninsula, a thought later echoed by a separate source in the 12th century, the Book of Leinster [11; 15]. The Book of Leinster states as a fact that the Celts of Ireland originally came from Iberia, and there has been evidence found by modern scholars of multiple ties between especially between Wales and Ireland, as well as to the Celtic movements in Iberia [5 p9-15; 11]. Still, most modern sources agree that for the most part, it was the Celtic languages, technologies, and identities that came to dominate the British countryside, rather than the mainland peoples themselves [1; 11].

Celtic languages crossed the channel alongside the other traits of their culture, and it is from this aspect that many ancients were able to identify and connect the different Celtic groups [10]. Languages associated with the Celts have been traced back beyond 2000 B.C.E. and the Bronze Age in the Germanic regions, and spread across Europe during and before the Hallstatt period [5 p9-15; 11]. The spread of a branch of the Celtic language to Britain and Ireland occurred sometime before the 3rd century B.C.E., presumably earlier, with the migration of their

technologies and other customs [5 p14-15; 11]. This movement is believed to have led to the principal split in Ancient Celtic dialects, between Insular Celtic and Continental Celtic [5 p34; 11]. The Roman conquest eroded and eventually wiped out many variations of Continental Celtic, with the Celtic languages in Brittany resulting from a later movement of Insular Celtic to the mainland [11]. Insular Celtic was then further split into P-Celtic or Brythonic, and Q-Celtic or Goidelic [5 p34-36;11]. As evidenced by their names, P-Celtic came from the transition of the Ancient Celtic “q” sound to a “p” sound, while Q-Celtic kept the “q” sound as a hard “c” [5 p34-36; 11]. P-Celtic, or Brythonic, is the language found throughout Wales and most of southern Britain, and also is likely the branch from which Pictish dialects came, while Goidelic became Gaelic in its Irish and then Scots-Gaelic forms, as the Irish crossed back to Scotland [5 p36; 11].

Celtic technology and culture first came to Britain during the Hallstatt period (750-450 B.C.E), which brought the Iron Age west and then north from central and eastern Europe [5 p8, 12-13, 24-26]. The Celtic era in British history first brought new crafting and smithing techniques with Bronze Age materials, then introduced iron working as well, which allowed for the felling of forests, along more effective use of metal in tools and warfare [5 p14]. The Hallstatt era was also characterized by further use of the wheel, especially in chariots for Celtic warfare [3; 5 p38; 9]. Hallstatt Celtic art relied mainly on the smithing techniques and art style of the earlier Urnfield culture, with repeated symmetrical patterns and curves and chevrons as parts of prominent designs [5 p14]. Other recurring motifs were depictions of people and animals, especially in the combination of mounted warriors [p14]. The Hallstatt Celts in Britain and elsewhere were known especially for their quality and rigidity of craftsmanship, producing

extremely detailed work [p14]. Grave finds from this era included many intricately stylized iron and bronze swords, horseshoe-hilted daggers, and winged axes [5 p14; 12]. The artifacts found at grave sites and hill forts also give us further insight into the workings of Celtic society, with a variety of materials of distant origin showing evidence of extensive trade, and opulent tombs for chieftains and warriors showing the importance of warfare in Celtic life [5 p14; 12].

Society in early Celtic Britain centered around the tribe. Tribes were linked together by the pledging of a freeman's arms to a chieftain, and this bond in war proved as thick as any bond of blood [5 p44]. War and hunting were glorified professions, as were the positions of chief and druid, but there were craftsmen, farmers, servants, and slaves as well [2; 5 p14; 9]. Chiefs, princes, and kings were chosen by merit in battle, or were elected annually [5 p50]. Druids helped connect the various tribes, and also connected tribal life to the past with a rich oral tradition [5 p126]. Graves from the early Hallstatt, as well as observations by the Romans and of later Pictish and Scottish society indicate that women and men were often equal in Celtic culture [5 p14; 12; 15]. Women could clearly hold positions of power and be warriors or rulers, as evidenced by the matrilineal descent of the royal line in medieval Scotland, and the gathering of the tribes under Boudicca in resistance to Rome [12; 15; 18 p43]. Tribes, or clans, were divided further into families, who were all linked in some way to the chieftain, and paid tribute in various forms, contributing to their substantial wealth and power over the tribe [5 p14]. Though the chieftain's graves and others showed that the Celts were often wealthy societies, and certainly well connected throughout the ancient world, the Celts never built empires, both because tribal feuds discouraged it, and because they simply didn't aspire to [5 p32; 12]. The Hallstatt Celts

continued to roam and farm just to maintain self sufficiency and to be able to trade for luxuries for the elites [5 p28; 12].

During the La Tène period, which immediately followed the Hallstatt era and continued until conquest by Rome, the Celts continued to spread into and throughout Britain, and in places adopted a more settled lifestyle [5 p25-26]. A continued focus on trade within the societies caused tribes to develop their own brand of villages, called “oppida” by the Romans [p48]. In Britain this settlement occurred mainly in the lowlands of the south and east, where resources were easier to come by, while the highland Celts maintained their lifestyle with cattle providing sustenance as they roamed [2]. A centralized lifestyle in the oppida, along with providing a single location for trade and societal exchange, also gave a focal point for the tribe which could have proved detrimental in battle [5 p50]. An attack on the oppida could cripple the tribes, and the fact that the southern Celts still gravitated toward this centralization indicated that they were slowly moving towards a more peaceful lifestyle [2; 5 p50]. Other changes in the La Tène era included the development of mail, and shifts in burial rites, as tribes began to bury chariots instead of wagons with their elite, perhaps indicating less of a focus on travel and more on settled war [5 p33, 39; 13]. Finally, with the development of villages and permanent markets, the La Tène culture also brought the production and use of currency [5 p50]. Originally found with the mercenary tribes, coinage in Celtic culture spread north into Britain and then was first used by chieftains in payment of mercenaries [p50]. Money was originally a sign of wealth and political power, being used only among the elite, but it seems to have spread to be more common, from Tacitus’ knowledge of its entrance into their economies [5 p50; 15].

Technology and art in the La Tène era echoed that of the earlier Hallstatt Celts, though it also advanced and developed its own distinguishing characteristics [5 p14]. The La Tène Celts repeated the geometric patterns and curves of the Hallstatt era now with more use of plants and legendary animals in their artwork [p14]. The Celts also borrowed from Greek and Etruscan forms and technologies, then transforming them with Celtic techniques to make them their own [5 p50; 13]. Again the Celtic craftsmanship incorporated a great deal of metal, with shields, torques, brooches, military accoutrements, and mirrors all made of iron and bronze [5 p50]. The Celts were capable of smelting iron and creating charcoal, which they used to exchange, and the also were credited for the development of both mail armor and wheeled vehicles for use in war [5 p50; 11; 13].

During the La Tène era, the urban lifestyle of the Celts grew up, not only in the oppida, but also in hill forts [5 p16, 48]. The Celtic hill forts are a well known and common feature of the British landscape, formed on or in hilltops and surrounded by defensive works [p16]. Hill forts were first discovered dating to the late Hallstatt, and were used for a variety of purposes, from sanctuaries in war, to administrative centers, markets, or storage areas, and they became a central focus for tribal life [p16-18]. The hill forts were also used as early industrial centers for smithing and smelting in areas such as western Wales, where mining was common [p18]. In larger hill forts, such as the Maiden Castle, it's possible the hill forts also regularly housed animals or were used for farming [p16]. Regardless of their use in any particular region, the hill forts were also a means of showing dominance over the countryside, both in war and trade [p18].

Both use of money and the centralization of society signaled power shifts and a change in the structure of Celtic leadership during the La Tène period [5 p50]. Instead rule by powerful

chieftains and kings, tribal oligarchies were give sovereignty, consisting of tribal elites and an aristocratic class [p50]. The more important decisions were made by these oligarchies, while on day-to-day matters the kings were replaced by magistrates, who were also elected, but with less power [p50-51]. All free men in a tribe or oppida formed an assembly, which would elect the magistrate and otherwise rarely meet [p50-51]. Again, this structure tended to be focused in the south and east, where the Celts settled and became somewhat a more peaceful people [2; 5 p50]. In war, it appears that the Celts were still led by chieftains, perhaps because of the need for a single authority figure with pertinent experience [9; 15]. And though the tribes would band together in certain circumstances, such as for fighting off the invading Romans, they also continued to wage war on themselves regularly [9; 13; 15]. In war, the aristocratic elites displayed their privilege as mounted cavalry, and even to the Romans the difference in status was clear [9].

The importance of war, even in the less mobile societies of the La Tène culture, cannot be overlooked when describing the Celts, and tales of their battles are some of the earliest accounts we have of them. The Celtic tribes were famed for their fierce bravery in battle and their unrestrained vigor [8; 9; 12; 15]. Their proclivity for war is shown by the extensive use of their technologies in tools of war and the artifacts with which elites were buried, and on the continent many tribes people completely mercenary societies [5 p44; 12; 16]. According to historian Ian Barnes, “Personal weapons were so important that a Celt would often prefer to commit suicide than surrender his weapons to someone” [5 p44]. The Celts used swords and daggers for slashing, and spears to throw or fight hand to hand [p44-45]. Elites would ride on horseback or in chariots into battle, and attempt charges to break the enemy line in their berserker rage and

display of fierceness [5 p45; 9]. Their skill with chariots and their horsemanship was legendary, and they used that renown and the chaos of their charges to intimidate enemies to their advantage [9]. Stories of Celts charging into battle naked pervade contemporary tales, though their shields and development of ring mail clearly show that that was not necessarily an accurate stereotype for the whole population [9; 13]. The body paint commonly described and apparent fierceness of the tribes may have been as much a scare tactic to aid their battle, for while there are accounts of entire tribes fighting to the death, they were also cunning in positioning themselves to easily flee losing battles [9]. The tribes fought with abandon in a disorganized manner, which suited their small bands of elite warriors in sowing confusion, but would prove to be of lessened effect against experienced and disciplined Romans [5 p45; 9; 15]. While Barnes mentions in his history of Celtic warfare that the Celts preferred open ground conflict, the accounts of Caesar and Tacitus contradict this in praising the ability of British tribes to take advantage of wooded or hilly terrain [5 p45; 9; 15]. The latter would help to explain their successes in Wales and the Highlands, as well as matching their tactics of ambushes followed by rapid retreat. Still, a lack of discipline and cunning tactics do not preclude bravery, and the Romans readily acknowledged that it was dedication and expertise rather than cowardice that defined Celtic warfare [9].

Though most often described simply as warlike, and lacking a written language, the Celtic tribes nonetheless maintained strong religious and oral traditions, which have survived for millennia beyond the Roman conquest [2; 4; 5 p126, 156]. The continuity of these traditions has largely been credited to the druids, and later bards, of the Celtic peoples [5 p126]. Druids were an elite class among the Celtic tribes, exempt from tribute or taxation and with leadership separate from the inter-clan struggles [5 p127; 9]. Druids were foremost an intellectual elite,

training for up to or more than twenty years so as to become knowledgeable about literature, rituals, laws, and history [5 p126]. They understood subjects from politics to mathematics and acted as religious authorities but also civil judges and mediators, within and between tribes [p126-127]. Though nothing was written down, Celtic legends and traditions prevailed long enough to significantly affect western Christianity, a testament to the work of the druids [p120-127]. Caesar first attacked the British Isles in part because he considered the druids such a threat and knew them to gather in the isles from Gaul and the rest of the north [9]. Celtic religious traditions centered around the natural world, and most ritual sites were connected to certain natural habitats, such as bodies of water, forests, or hills [5 p124]. The Celts worshipped and offered sacrifices to a pantheon of gods, much like the Romans, and eventually brought their traditions and influence into Christianity [5 p120-125; 19].

Trade was another defining aspect of Celtic culture, linking tribes to each other and to the outside world [5 p28; 7 p5]. In Britain the Celtic economy also brought more extensive mining and the crafting of ore, along with the development of market-orientation [5 p18; 7 p5]. Coins found in southern England and Roman accounts of metal currency show that the Celts had advanced beyond solely barter systems sometime during the late La Tène period [5 p18; 9]. While the British Celts were largely self-sufficient in agriculture, and mined many of the materials they used, they would often exchange their surpluses of raw materials for foreign goods [5 p18, 28]. Celtic tribes had spread throughout Europe and often maintained limited contact with each other, developing ship building techniques and iron tires for wheeled vehicles to allow for greater mobility [p28]. During the Hallstatt era, trade networks were used to bring more basic goods to Britain, but as the tribes settled and established themselves more fully, they

began to trade for more exotic items [5 p28; 12]. Trade linked the Celtic with all corners of the ancient world, and the British imports include wine vessels from the mediterranean, silver and glass from Rome, and fish sauces from the western ports of Brittany or Iberia [5 p30]. Evidence of Chinese silk has even been found in early Celtic grave sites [p32]. The Celtic peoples brought Britain into close contact with commercial centers all over Europe, developing economic ties to Rome long before being brought into its empire [p30].

Celtic ties to the continent may have in fact been the undoing of Celtic Britain, as Julius Caesar's first foray into Britain came in following the trail of the Gauls to defeat their haven and allies in the isles [9]. Caesar sailed to Britain in the midst of his conquest of Gaul in the summer of 55 B.C.E. in order to scout the island [9]. His small force was repelled at the beach and once his ships were repaired, he ordered a retreat to Gaul [9; 29]. The next summer he returned and battled many of the tribes of the south with a fair amount of success, though his accounts report that the chaos and natural defenses confounded his soldiers in the earlier battles [9]. The tribes eventually banded together at Caesar's greater threat, though once Caesar forced the surrender and demanded hostages from the most powerful tribe in the region, the others followed suit [9]. Caesar made it up just past the Thames and commanded tribute to be sent from the tribes to Rome, but then had to return to Gaul with the end of the summer and never returned [9; 18 p43]. Caesar's account is one of the earliest written works on Celtic Britain, and as such greatly expanded the body of information on the history and culture of the island in that period. It would be another 97 years before Rome again turned its eyes to Britain, this time effecting a lasting conquest that would dominate the south for 400 years, but still could not erase the traces of Celtic culture [5 p63; 7 p4-5; 18 p43].

The Celtic ways of life continued long past the age of Roman Britain and even Norman England, leaving their mark in the British identities even today [2; 3; 5 p155; 6 p6-8; 7 p7]. Major trade routes which had been established continued to be exploited and expanded by the Romans and British peoples, and the economies which had been established simply grew to include the Roman presence [5 p30; 7 p5]. The same goods which had been produced in Britain under the Celts continued to be with slight alterations for Roman markets, and the mining and metal-working processes which had been brought to Britain by the Celts were expanded to meet the needs of the Roman empire [5 p30; 7 p4-5]. Other Celtic systems were simply adopted to fit the Roman needs, with tribal power structures left in place with Roman authority simply superimposed over it [5 p100; 7 p5]. In the north and west of the island, Roman authority was never complete, and in Scotland (labelled Caledonia by the Romans) the tribes continued their roaming lifestyle, with tribal warfare and Celtic customs surviving far longer than the Roman control [2; 5 p100-101; 6 p3-8; 7 p4-5]. Scotland and Wales would continue to preserve their language through the Norman conquest, and throughout the middle ages the lifestyle and belligerent culture of Celtic society delayed or prevented the establishment of an effective and organized state [2; 4].

Celtic heritage in language, literature, and legend was preserved by the strength of the oral tradition, surviving long enough to be written down during the middle of the first millennium [5 p120]. The stories of the fae, sprites, the little people and the giants in British folklore still trace back to Celtic origins [p138-149]. The retelling of legends in the countryside of England, as well as throughout Scotland and Wales, helped to perpetuate the more colorful and fantastic aspects of Celtic culture in Britain, with figures such as the kelpies of the lochs

tracing back to Celtic river spirits [p138-149]. Purely religious traditions continued as well, with the use of mistletoe, veneration of midsummer's day, and Halloween all tracing back to the Celts [p126-155]. Celtic traditions also influenced the Christian church once embracing it, with many of their customs folding into the church in Britain, and the later Celts creating legends derived from figures and themes of both traditions [p154-157]. The Celts were largely responsible for spreading Christianity through early Britain, especially following the end of Roman rule [p156-159].

The Celts transformed Britain fully both during their domination of the island and through the continuation of their culture through the centuries of later invasions. The fighting spirit of the tribes has been reflected throughout the history of the island, and their oral traditions have many Celtic customs alive even in the lands where they were later dominated. Wales and Scotland in particular bear the marks of Celtic influence, and lasting for so many years as truly Celtic lands, they have also influenced the rest of Britain in their interactions and cultural exchange.

Roman Britain

Roughly a century after Julius Caesar's brief contact with Britain, the eyes of Rome again turned to the isle, seeking the wealth of the land and a political conquest [2; 5 p96; 7 p5; 19]. This time, Emperor Claudius of Rome had prior insight into the nature of the islands inhabitants, drawing from the notes of Caesar's accounts [18 p44]. With this knowledge, in A.D. 43, Aulus Plautius led 40,000 men to attack the southern shores, and within four years a large swath of southeast Britain was under Roman control [5 p96-97; 18 p44]. Over the next thirty years, after facing fierce battles in the west and in the north of England, the Romans slowly stretched their empire up to encompass almost all of modern day England and Wales [5 p96-99; 30]. Roman conquest was plagued by uprisings, especially in Wales, such as the one led by the Boudicca in A.D. 60 [5 p98-99; 15; 18 p44; 30]. Despite the fortitude of the Roman legions and their large numbers, the conquest of the west took decades and nearly was overwhelmed on several occasions [2; 5 p96-99; 30]. It took a number of revolts and strict Roman retaliation for the provincial governor Agricola to realize the need for gentler terms and a looser rule over the Celts [5 p99; 15; 30]. Agricola overcame the Celts at Mons Gropius to reach the Moray Firth in A.D. 84, and the Romans reached the high point in their expansion across the island [2; 5 p97; 30]. After this point, the Romans slowly ceded land in the highlands back to the Celts, building Hadrian's Wall in northern England in the 120's as a border and admitting the overwhelming cost of occupying Scotland [2; 5 p101; 30]. Later the Antonine Wall was built, a little over 50 miles north of Hadrian's wall, but it was ultimately abandoned, with few incentives for further occupation of the north [2; 5 p102-103; 6].

As the Roman army stalled in the north, the soldiers began to settle around the fortifications and build up Roman towns in Britain [19; 30]. Granted land for their services, or simply settling into their permanent garrisons, legionnaires brought the Roman urban lifestyles to their outposts [19; 30]. Merchants, ex-legionnaires, and groups of camp followers came to create major centers around military outposts, including Chester, Carleon, and York [7 p5; 18 p44; 19; 30]. However, the outposts in the north and west often became isolated bastions of Roman culture, cut off from their surroundings by an impoverished countryside and continued strong Celtic influence that couldn't or did not support the invaders' customs [7 p5; 19; 30]. Roman influence was thus more constrained to the south and east, region that would eventually become England [7 p4-5; 19]. England's wealth, peaceful societies, and developing towns provided the perfect setting for Roman culture to grow [2; 5 p62; 30]. While resistance had been strong moving into the more mountainous regions, the towns of the lowlands romanized quickly, often immersing themselves completely in the customs of the empire within a generation or two after conquest [5 p62; 15; 30]. According to Tacitus, living in the same era, "The Britons themselves bear cheerfully the conscription, the taxes, and the other burdens imposed on, them by the Empire, if there be no oppression. Of this they are impatient; they are reduced to subjection, not as yet to slavery" [15]. This acceptance of subjugation on the condition of fair treatment mirrored earlier actions by the southern tribes in Caesar's battles [9]. The speed of the acculturation process also reflected the nature of the southern Celtic society in emphasizing how fully the inhabitants had already adopted a settled lifestyle, even prior to Roman influence [5 p50].

The Roman politicians, tradesmen, and civilians had moved into the south as soon as the legions pushed north, and though they were few in number, by gently guiding the Britons with a

loose rule they were able to integrate many trappings of Roman civilization [15; 19; 30]. Roman British towns were led by councils of native elites under loose Roman direction, and in turn for their status in Roman society, the Celts eagerly accepted the transformations the empire brought along with its tax collectors [15; 19; 30]. Oppida grew to towns, which then swelled into major commercial centers, connected by new networks of roads [7 p5; 30]. Londinium, which would later become London, stood at the center of some of the major crossroads, and it, along with the other cities, began to see Roman bathhouses, architecture, gridded streets, temples, theatres, market squares, and many other novel constructs characteristic of the mediterranean-based civilization [7 p5; 18 p44; 30]. A housing boom occurred as tribal culture moved towards urbanization, and those wealthy enough to afford it basked in the indulgence of expanded trade with the continent [7 p5; 19]. British elites sought to gain status as Roman citizens, and did so by emulating their conquerors and consuming mediterranean wine and culture [7 p5; 30]. British mining grew along with the economy, furnishing a major natural resource long-sought by the empire [7 p5; 20]. Connection to Rome became a sign of status in southern Britain, and the Roman definition of civilization dominated England for the next 400 years [7 p4-6; 18 p44-45; 30].

In addition to material wealth and the more physically manifested norms, the Roman era brought new language and religion to Britain [18 p45; 21]. Though some Celtic druids had been learned in Greek and able to write in it as well, the earlier Britons had been largely illiterate due to the lack of written forms of Celtic [5 p36, 126]. Roman influence brought Latin to the elites, and with it, writing and reading, very slowly beginning the decay of the Celtic tongues [5 p62; 18 p45]. Due in part to the introduction of Latin as a written language, and much more so to the

later and more complete dominance of German, words from the Celtic tongues are hard to find in the English language [18 p73]. Celtic-based English nouns are rare, except in the names of specific places or natural features, such as the Thames, Avon, Dover, or Bryn Mawr [p73-74]. Barely a score of other Old English words have Celtic roots, of which some were names for items that hadn't existed in Germany and others were brought by contact later on with Irish missionaries [p74].

Latin did not replace Celtic in the time of the Romans, but more Latin roots than Celtic were sustained in the Old English language [18 p73-75]. These came not only from the Roman British civilizations, but also from the earlier Celtic trade with Rome and later interactions of the Saxons with Rome and the Christian church [p75]. Latin-based loan words from Britain's time under Rome were often related to either war or trade, those two being the primary interactions between the Celtic tribes and the empire [p78]. In addition to the battles between resisting Celts and the Roman armies, words for weapons and war logistics were adopted on the island because many Celts joined Roman armies and brought some of their language back [p78]. In general, however, spoken Latin never gained much of a foothold in the lower classes of British society, and so it did not mix much with the native Celtic and was mostly wiped out instead of integrated when later Saxon invaders displaced the upper class [18 p45, 79]. Aside from words of trade and war, Latin survived mainly in the Christian Church that first came to Britain in the centuries of Roman rule [18 p44; 21].

Early Romans brought their mythology with them to the island, and it was somewhat adopted by the natives inhabitants, but the Romans who came were also willing to embrace aspects of the also polytheistic Celtic tradition [3; 5 p124; 19]. During Roman occupation,

however, Britain and Rome each adopted the Christian religion as their own [19; 21]. Accounts vary as to when Christianity came to the peoples of the island, by Bede claims that it was adopted as a major tradition as early as A.D. 156 by the British king Lucius [5 p120; 21]. The *Historia Ecclesiastica* also claims that the religion persisted until 286, when Emperor Diocletian rose to power and began to slaughter Christians throughout the empire, and emerged 20 years later as persecution ended [21]. Other sources indicate that the persecution only lasted a few years, beginning around 303, but regardless, under Constantine in 316 (whom some British claim as their own) Christianity became the faith of the empire [19; 31; 32]. In 314 British Bishops were first sent to the Council of Aries, one indicator that an organized Christian church had been established throughout the island [3; 21].

Celtic culture did persist throughout the Roman era, both within England and especially in the frontier and unconquered regions [2; 4; 6 p8]. In England, though education became another vehicle of rising through society, the value of the war was somewhat preserved, as Britons could become citizens through service in the legions [5 p62]. It was after the fall of the empire that more Celtic traits re-established themselves in the south, such as the language and incorporation of oral tradition into the new Christian faith [5 p154-155; 6; 18 p45]. In Scotland and Wales, the earlier societies kept a firmer grasp [2; 4; 15]. Wales kept their Celtic tongues and legends for many years after the conquest, and Scotland remained much the same as before, with clan life surviving well into the middle ages [2; 4; 6]. Christianity later came to both regions via Ireland, and found support there during later invasions of England, but its Irish heritage meant even more connection to the old Celtic ways [3; 5 p156-157]. It was due to these regions in the

north and west that the Celtic influence survived later eras so much more fully than the Roman culture [4; 5 p116; 6].

Towards the end of the 4th century, the Roman empire began to see an increase in attacks on its borders, forcing it to withdraw from certain frontiers to protect others [5 p114; 7 p5-6]. About 410 A.D. the last of the Roman legions vacated Britain, leaving it to the mercy of the Scottish, Pictish, and Viking attacks [5 p114-116; 18 p45; 20]. The Picts came first, streaming across Hadrian's Wall into England, and the Scotti soon sailed in to raid and settle in the north from Ireland [20; 21]. The British first called for Roman support, but the empire was unable to sustain a military presence on the island while also fighting the Huns and Goths [18 p45-47; 20; 21]. Though there had been prior raids by the viking tribes of Germany and the Baltic, the Britons then requested aid from the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons in fending off the Picts [3; 7 p5-6; 18 p45-47; 20; 21]. The Germanic tribes were promised lands in Britain for their assistance, but around A.D. 450, soon after arriving, they began to join with the Picts in raiding the natives in England [18 p45-47; 20; 21]. As Bede states, the people of southern Britain were by then unused to warfare or unlearned in "the use of weapons," and so were unable to consistently repel the invaders [20; 21]. This consequence of the Roman domination was certainly unintended, but important, as their control and protection of the south east of the island helped pacify the English culture and also initiated a division of Britain that can even be seen today [3; 4].

Roman occupation had a largely divisive effect on British culture, influencing some areas through the acculturation process, and the island even more profoundly by leaving other regions untouched, setting the stage for the amalgamation of strong cultural identities that exists today [3; 19]. Conversely, the Romans also brought the island together in some ways, providing the

first instance of a unified political entity spanning at least a large part of the region [7 p4-5; 19; 21]. The Romans were the first to designate all the inhabitants of the island as Britons, for while the Celtic tribes had coexisted within a single culture and occasionally were tied together by trade or war, they had not shared a sense of singular identity as a nation [3; 7 p6-7; 15; 19]. In addition to a precedent for a united island, the empire brought the southern half of the isle to a more urban lifestyle, solidifying the settling that had begun with hill forts and oppida [5 p62-63, 112-118; 7 p5; 30]. Though urban decay immediately followed the removal of the legions, and much of the roman lifestyle was abandoned, major trade centers survived that exist as cities today, and the highways connecting the island remained as trade routes [7 p5-9; 18 p44; 30]. The Roman era also saw the introduction of Christianity to the island, as well as widespread influence of written language and the first formalized connection between Britain and the continent [7 p19; 18 p44-47; 20; 21; 30].

The Era of Invasion and Germanic Influence

After the Roman retreat, Britain immediately began to experience another cultural shift in a time of turmoil and intruding peoples. The new influences can be generally grouped into two categories: the Celtic Scottish and Pictish invaders, and the more widespread conglomeration of north eastern Germanic or Scandinavian raiders [3; 7 p5; 20]. The Picts were native to the island, but a threat to Roman Britain as they surged south of Hadrian's wall and raided the north of what would become England [3; 7 p5]. Irish tribes of Scotti landed in the north west of the island around the times the Romans left, bringing another form of Celtic culture and a new force for the Britons to deal with, as the Scots fought with both the Romanized and Pictish inhabitants [3; 20; 21]. According to Bede, the Romans then returned briefly to instruct the Britons in defense and repel the Celtic tribes [21]. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* seems to contradict this, and other sources are in conflict, but regardless, it is clear that any Roman resurgence was brief, and the Britons were forced to call to the Germanic tribes for assistance [3; 5 p35; 7 p5; 20; 21].

Germanic or Scandinavian tribes hailed from Denmark, northern Germany (actually just north of where the Celtic culture had originated), and parts of southern Scandinavia, and they formed the second group of invaders into Roman Britain [5 p35; 7 p5-6; 20; 21]. Jutes, Angles, and Saxons had begun to sail to raid the coast of Britain early in the 3rd century, but at the call of the king of the Britons they now had an open invitation to come to the island [7 p5; 20; 21]. After pushing the Celtic tribes out of the north east of England, however, the Germanic tribes were not content with the land in the south east which they had been granted for their aid [20; 21]. They too began to harass the natives and pushed west, becoming perhaps even more of a threat to Roman Britain [20; 21]. This new force had such an influence that by the time the Danish came in A.D. 787,

becoming last invaders of this era, they were fighting a distinctly Germanic English people who had taken the place of the Romans [20].

The Germanic invasions persisted as the newcomers sent for support from their homeland and steadily forced the natives of Britain to retreat to the west [4; 18 p45-47; 20]. Unlike their predecessors, the Romans, and to a far greater extent than the Celts, this newest wave of invaders displaced the original inhabitants of the land they conquered, largely repopulating it on their own [7 p7; 21]. The locals were forced into hiding for a time, and also moved their civilization west, bringing more Roman influence into Wales in the form of a more settled lifestyle [4; 18 p45-47; 20; 21]. The Germanic tribes then split the island: the Saxons pushed into modern-day Essex, Sussex, and Wessex as well as north of the Thames; the Angles formed East Anglia along the eastern coast, north of Humber and about halfway up the island; the Jutes, who came first, pushed through Kent, taking over the south east corner of Britain [6 p8-12; 18 p45-47; 20]. The center of modern England then became Mercia, and the north east became Northumbria [6 p8-12]. By A.D. 603, Bede states that the Northumbrians had pushed the Scottish and Welsh (the Celts and Roman Britons) completely out of England and to their modern territories [21]. Movement west into modern Wales by the Romanized Britons actually helped give the land its name, with the term “Wealas” (later “Welsh”) first used by the Germanic tribes to describe the Britons they displaced [3; 18 p49]. The settling and urbanization that had been assisted by Rome remained to some extent in England, but much of the population moved out and brought their culture with them, resulting in a concentration of the original inhabitants and an further amalgamation of cultures in Wales[3; 4; 7 p9; 21]. Scotland was also characterized by a shift in the prior Celtic culture, but in the northern region it was more a matter of the new

Scottish Celts from Ireland overwhelming the native Pictish Celts, resulting in a less distinct change [3; 4; 7 p8-9].

Germanic -more commonly referred to as Anglo-Saxon- Britain, brought many changes to English culture [7 p7-20; 20; 21]. Though previously the geographical center and south of Britain had been a more prosperous and settled agricultural area, and this feature remained, where it had previously been more peaceful and had submitted quickly to invaders, it was now characterized by conflict [5 p48-50; 7 p7; 20; 21]. The Romano-Britons, though by some accounts weakened by their complacency in peace and fairly quickly conquered or displaced, still put up more of a resistance to the raiders than most continental nations, either a sign of some persistent militant spirit from prior cultures or simply in acknowledgement of how much Romano-British civilization stood to lose [7 p7-8]. Assimilation that had been present in barbarian invasions on the continent was completely absent in Britain, and even the urban base that had been created as early as the oppida was slowly worn away in the Germanic inheritance [5 p50-51; 7 p7, 12-15]. Agricultural productivity and even the size of livestock decreased with the loss of earlier methods and technology for cultivation, and trade and communication also suffered [7 p16]. Some cities such as London remained, especially in the west where the Romano-Britons had fled, and society did not go back to the roaming tribes of the early Halstatt period, but the new population spread out to create a more rural society, a basis for what would later become a feudal system of the middle ages [7 p12-15; 20].

The Normans have been given a great deal of credit for this “progression” of societal structure in Britain, but in truth the Germanic nations of the island laid the foundation and firmly entrenched the system in England [7 p25-31; 22 p9, 63]. In fact, it was the West Saxons who first

established a shire system as Wessex expanded [7 p20]. In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* the shires are mentioned as early as 675 in the pope Agatho's address to the king of Mercia ("...I command also, that no shire-bishop be so bold...") and their Reves (the stewards, whose name became "shire-reeve", then the modern "sheriff") were mentioned as important figures in an entry dating A.D. 787 [20]. Shires, the equivalent of modern counties, were divided into hundreds, the lowest local level of government for freemen [7 p20]. Judicial systems and local law enforcement were connected to each hundred and each shire, a system to connect all freemen to their local ruler [p20]. The shire system, a defining characteristic of especially western England and Wales, was paralleled by the development of a manorial institution, which evolved from the rural farming economy [7 p14-15, 20]. Serfs were subject to lords (knights, barons, or otherwise) and tied to their lands, providing services or rent to the lords in exchange for military protection [7 p14; 34; 35 p26-31]. As before, and as was common in the era, ties within governmental and aristocratic hierarchy were often personal and hereditary positions became more common [7 p14].

Order of precedence and differentiating inequality were hallmarks of the system the Germanic invaders brought, and maintenance of privilege, the past (recent that it may be), and the status quo were of utmost importance (obviously especially to the elites) [7 p14-15]. The manorial system was a clear manifestation of this, with clear distinctions between serfs, slaves, free men, and each level of the ruling classes [p14-15]. As opposed to the semi-representative system of electing rulers and assemblies found in the tribes, oppida, and then Roman towns, politics were now reserved solely for the elite classes and inherited land or tenure dictated the role one could play in society [5 p50-51; 7 p14-15]. Women also lost whatever token equality they had achieved in English society, and were now completely subordinate to males and locked

into a small number of roles [7 p14-15]. After Boudicea there is no mention of women in positions of power in the south for another thousand years or so, though aristocratic women were occasionally able to hold lands or inherit on their own [7 p14-15; 20; 21]

Another change brought by the Germanic tribes, who at first were referred to by the Britons with the single moniker of “Saxons”, was the introduction of their language and literature [18 p49, 67]. Where Welsh was born of Celtic language surviving Latin’s use by the elites, the takeover by Germanic tribes punctured every level of society, and what was called “Englisc” became the vernacular of southeast Britain [3; 18 p49-53]. It’s very possible that that’s why the English survives as a Germanic language despite the Norman invasion, a sign of the cultural continuity despite changes in the ruling classes. The name of the language derives from the emergence of Anglecynn or Angli as common terms for the entire Germanic population, though the West Saxons, redefined by new grouping in Britain, were the ones to eventually claim dominance, not the Angles [18 p49; 20]. Old English was derived from a West Germanic dialect subgroup called Ingvaeonic, and the transformation from Old English to Middle and Modern English was a continuous one [18 p50; 37 p18-19]. The development of the language with the influx of Latin-based vocabulary in later eras means that about 85% of Old English words have been lost in Modern English vocabulary, but the Old English structure still provides a substantial base for the structure of Modern English [18 p53-54]. Words such as fire, holy, boat, head, bone, foot, and numerous other basic nouns and descriptors have clear Old English and Germanic equivalents [18 p53]. However, the gender-based and neutral Old English nouns that corresponded to Germanic genders have become entirely neuter in the Modern English structure,

and the four inflections of the Germanic Old English have been replaced by the use of analytic prepositions and modifiers. [18 p56].

In addition to the makeup of the dominant language, pre-medieval England borrowed the basis for much of its literature from Germanic sources [18 p67; 38]. Old English literature tended to be focused either around Christian religious or clerical subjects or pagan or Germanic elegies or legends [18 p67; 38]. The two divisions of literature often mix or overlap, as much of the German tradition was preserved in writing after both the Saxon nations and Christianity had gained dominance on the island [18 p67-68]. Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* provides a clear example of Christian chronicling under a Saxon king, while Beowulf tells a story of a Scandinavian hero by inserting explicit Christian references and themes [21; 38]. The Germanic poems describe experiences from the Saxon and scandinavian heritages of travel, and also show the intense Anglo-Saxon societal themes of loyalty, duty, and war [18 p68]. Literature from the era embodies the mixing of cultures on the island, and at the same time the distinct separation of the developing Anglo-Saxon state from the Celtic traditions [18 p45].

As the south and east of Britain were overwhelmed by a Germanic entity and identity, the west and north both experienced a mixing of old and new cultures. In Wales and the west, this meant an injection of more Romano-British culture into the Celtic society that had survived the Romans and was largely untouched by the Germanic tribes [3; 6 p8; 7 p10; 21]. In the Celtic lands there was no great shaking of society's structure, though Roman culture may have penetrated a little more deeply than previously into Wales, providing trade links to the continent and leading to a more settled lifestyle [4; 7 p9-10]. Latin entered the churches of Wales, though, at the same time the Celtic Welsh language developed, overpowering and outlasting Latin as the

language of the people [3; 7 p9-10]. In Scotland the Scotti slowly absorbed and wiped out Pictish culture, but the similarities were such between the Celtic peoples that specific changes other than that of the dialect are difficult to ascertain [4; 7 p8-9]. Clans and the importance of kinship remained in both regions, and infighting between tribes persisted, delaying the establishment of a united state [4; 7 p10]. Loyalty to family or chief overwhelmed any sense of loyalty to king or feudal lord, and so connections in overarching hierarchies were weak except for the sake of presenting a united front in war [4; 7 p9-10]. In contrast with the Saxon or Germanic society of England, women were held as equals in society, even in war, and disparity between classes was not so great (in part perhaps because of the pitfalls to a larger hierarchy) [3; 4]. Greater change would come with the coming of the Church to Celtic Britain, but the allowances of St. Columba meant that oral traditions, folklore and even the positions of the bards were preserved [3; 20].

Christianity had been present on the island since Roman times, but as the Church matured and the religion spread and retreated among the peoples and nations of Britain, it influenced the development of British civilization and identities [5 p120-127; 7 p11-12; 20; 21]. By 314, Britain had established a Christian Church throughout the island, but the series of invaders disrupted the Church on the island, and as different kings and Germanic British nations took power, the influence of Christianity in England rose and fell [3; 20; 21]. Bishops were sent to the island throughout the first millennium, establishing the papacy's influence on the island even as the pope acknowledged the rule of various Saxon, Mercian, and Northumbrian kings [7 p11; 20]. This religions connection helped to align Britain with continental culture, though the process was far from simple [7 p11; 20; 21]. Sometime during the reign of Ethelbert of Kent (beginning circa A.D. 560), Ethelbert became the first English king to become baptized, and in 597 the See of

Canterbury was established with Augustine as its archbishop [20; 36]. Augustine consecrated other bishops underneath him, and also played a role in converting Edwin of Northumbria to Christianity [20]. During the middle of the 7th century, Northumbria's church was acknowledged by Rome and began an English church of its own under the archbishop appointed by the papacy [7 p11; 20]. Yet the constantly shifting sands on which the Germanic kingdoms lay meant that each successor to a throne might return to prior religions or chafe under the distant ties to Rome, and the centuries of war for dominance in England offered no guarantees of any reliable popular conversion [20]. Eventually, however, with help from the Celtic Church, England became Christian again, which meant further integration of education, written law, and institutionalization of society [7 p11-2; 20].

Somewhat ironically, the Celtic lands that were so plagued by political hierarchical chaos experienced at least a slightly more consistent conversion to Christianity. Though it had not had as firm a hold, Christianity had been previously present Celtic Britain just as it had in Roman territories [21]. As early as A.D. 423, the pope sent a bishop to lead the Christian Celts in Scotland, though it was later that the mass conversion came [20; 21]. Wales actually began this movement during the Saxon invasions, protected as it was by its position in the west [3]. Wales was the first to build Christian monasteries on the island, which then spread the faith to Ireland, where Catholicism grew strong [3]. In A.D. 563, Saint Columba was excommunicated for trying to reform the church in Ireland and was forced to sail towards Scotland in exile [3]. He founded a monastery there, on the island of Iona, which would then become a center of Celtic Christian faith [3; 7 p11; 20]. From Iona and Scotland, assisted by the influence of the Irish Church, Christianity spread throughout Celtic Britain, buoyed by the support of the Scottish kings [3; 7

p8, 11]. The growth of Celtic Christianity and the monastery at Iona are often credited for the later conversions of Mercia and Northumbria, though again, in the Germanic states it the transformation went back and forth for centuries [3; 7 p11].

The conflicts that delayed the establishment of a Christian Church in England also delayed the establishment of a single state of the Germanic nations, for though there were numerous occasions of over-kings whose nations held a majority of English lands, the kingdoms were either continuously contested or extremely short lived [20]. It was the West Saxons that eventually triumphed, but though their reign in hindsight was acknowledged by the authors of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as lasting since A.D. 519, it took over 300 years for the Saxons to gain dominance [6 p8; 20]. By some accounts Egbert is given credit for having conquered all of the non-Celtic British lands in A.D. 829, and the Chronicle says he was the eighth to do so, but his position was that of over-king for Northumbria, Mercia, Kent, East Anglia, and not ruler of a single conjoined state [6 p8; 20]. Alfred (circa 900 A.D.) was the first king to really hold dominance over the Germanic nations in Britain and to bring them together, but his authority really was a result of other royal lineages having been killed off by the viking invasions [6 p8; 7 p19; 20]. Even Alfred still ruled only part of the English land, as the Danes and Norse vikings held various territories throughout Britain [6 p11; 20]. However, it is significant that the writer of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in Alfred's time referred to him as being "king over all the English nation," indicating a sense of unity and solidarity among the non-Celtic or viking peoples of the island [20]. By 973, after the reconquest of the island, Edgar was crowned in Bath as the uncontested ruler of all of England, beginning the long tradition of the English coronation service and continuity in the kingship and nation [6 p13].

The Vikings, both Danish and Norse, helped the establishment of both the English and Scottish states by providing the one thing that had been consistently successful in uniting the myriad of British peoples since the coming of Caesar: a common foe [2; 7 p18; 9; 15]. Viking attacks to the Germanic conglomeration in Britain were noted as early as A.D. 787 in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, when the Danes came to sack major religious and political centers in Northumbria [7 p17; 20]. The vikings came as raiders, colonizers, and traders, and throughout the 9th century increased their attacks on Britain, searching for wealth and fertile lands in which to settle [7 p17-18; 20]. Viking transportation, with their shallow boats, provided the perfect means for sailing along the British coastline and rivers, allowing them to attack all over the island [6 p11; 7 p17]. Norsemen attacked and settled mainly around the northern edges of the island, fighting with the Scottish and forcing the monks at Iona to retreat to Ireland for a time [3; 6 p11; 7 p17]. Christianity remained, however, and Kenneth MacAlpin's heirs to the throne of Scotland used the viking invasion to unite at least most of the tribes [7 p21]. Danish peoples, meanwhile, raided the east coast of the island and managed to conquer most of England for a time in the mid-9th century [6 p11]. The viking invaders took out many contenders for the thrones of Britain and gave a force for the Scottish and English peoples to rally against, making headway in establishing a state where the infighting tribes and Germanic nations could not on their own [7 p18-19].

Beginning around A.D. 876, Alfred and then Edward the Elder, Aethelflaed Lady of Mercia, Aethelstan, and Edmund struck out from Wessex to retake Mercia and most of England almost up to York and Manchester, then spread beyond, defeating the Vikings in Northumbria, East Anglia, and Danish Mercia [6 p12-13; 7 p19]. The West Saxons all did this in the name of

“Re”-conquest, and also converted the Danes who submitted to Christianity [7 p19]. The fact that Aethelflaed was in fact responsible for recapturing Derby, Leicester, and York bespoke the potential for power for women in society, but the fact that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, written soon after, credits her brother for all of her conquests, shows again the disparity in accreditation and ascribing roles to different social groups [17 p19; 20]. Separation between Germanic nations was still evident in the reconquest as Edward’s overlordship splintered after his death and had to be reconquered by Aethelstan, whose death then again allowed the kingdom to splinter [7 p19; 20]. Eadred, however, who ruled for just 9 years from 946-955, could be called the first effective king of England, as his kingdom remained continuous in its passing to Edgar [7 p19]. As the vikings were pushed back, English society began to reestablish itself [7 p19-20]. Religiously, it did so with the spread and strengthening of Christianity and Christian cultural activity such as carving and illumination, and with the Church’s support of the Saxon kings [7 p20].

Administration was now much easier under a united and more stable state, and systems of taxation and law and other institutions began to mature [7 p19-20]. Coinage became uniform again, military service became regular and systems of inheritance of positions were established [7 p19-20]. During the reconquest, ties to the continent also began to grow again, as Aethelstan cultivated them for support in order to regain control during his reign [7 p19]. This scenario would be repeated a hundred years later with Edward the Confessor, leading in to the Norman conquest [7 p25; 22 p1-21].

The era following the fall of the Roman Empire was one of political upheaval for central and southern Britain, but as the 1st millennium neared its close, it brought a greater sense of unity and the formation of England [7 p8-25; 20]. Invasions began the period of fractures, as

Germanic invaders overwhelmed and split Roman Britain into smaller kingdoms, but danish and norse invasions later on brought the process full circle, by providing a common enemy and removing former contestants to allow West Saxon kings to reconquer and unify the region [6 p11-13; 7 p19-20; 20]. Shifts in the heritage of Britain's inhabitants also brought new language and social structures to the island [18 p45-67; 7 p16-20]. A dialect of West Germanic would form the basis for Old English as the new vernacular, and would bring with it a distinct new set of legends and literature for Britain [18 p45-67; 37 p18-19]. Meanwhile, Saxon England introduced feudal society under its new kings as they grew in power [7 p16-20]. The era was also characterized by a struggle over the influence of Christianity among the new inhabitants of the island, but as the English nation finally united, it adopted the religion wholeheartedly, furnishing a different sort of tie to the new power in Rome [20; 21]. Developing Celtic regions of Wales and Scotland were instrumental in bringing the Christian influence to England, as they also embraced the religion while maintaining much of their prior culture [3; 4; 5 p120-127; 21]. Each area also faced an influx of new peoples and ideas, as the Roman Britons were forced west into Wales and the Scottish society absorbed the Pictish in the north [4; 7 p8-9]. In the face of newer influences, these natural divisions of the island showed the persistence of earlier cultures, which would maintain their strongholds for another thousand years [4; 5 p120-149; 7 p36, 62-63].

Danish Rule and the Norman Conquest

Not long after Edgar was declared the ruler of a unified England, another threat to the crown sailed out of the east [20]. The Danish and Scandinavian enemy which had helped the West Saxons solidify their position now came in greater force to take the throne away [6 p10; 20]. After Edgar died in 975, he was succeeded by first his son Edward, then Edward's brother Ethelred in 979 [20]. By the 990's, what the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* describes as an army of pirates from the north was relentlessly attacking the coast of England and even sailed around the island to hit Wales [20]. The Danish and Scandinavian fleet harassed the countryside and cities of eastern England until the English were forced to pay tribute, though even the tribute did not stop the viking attacks [7 p24; 20]. The fleet and army from the east used their maneuverability to avoid confrontations with Ethelstan's army as they plundered the land and burned what they could not take [7 p24; 20]. Wearing away at the strength of the British, the vikings defeated London in 1013 and declared their king Sweyn to be king of England, forcing Ethelstan to flee to Normandy with his family [7 p24; 20; 40]. Sweyn died within the year, causing Ethelstan to return and retake London, but he too died soon after, and his son Edmund Ironsides briefly took the mantle of king to fight Sweyn's son Cnute and the English lords who had defected to the Dane [20; 40]. After Edmund's defeat and death, Cnute took control of governing England by the year 1017 [20].

Cnute's reign in England was remarkable for both its efficiency and in the lack of cultural change or social upheaval under a foreign state [7 p24-25; 20]. Cnute, ruler of Denmark and Norway, treated England as simply another kingdom in his collection, and did not attempt to impose on it the customs of his larger empire [7 p24-25]. Danelaw was imposed only in Danish

communities, and continuity was the defining characteristic of Cnute's Rule [7 p24-25; 20]. The government which Cnute took over was already an effective system, and while Cnute subdivided the land into earldoms to have a simpler system for controlling his vast holdings, no real social or political recasting took place [7 p24]. Cnute spent much of his time away from England, but his transition to power was so smooth and his changes to the nation were so few that he faced no troublesome rebellions in his absence [7 p24; 20]. Cnute continued to support the strength of London and England's monasteries, and though the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* expresses bitterness about his method of ascension, there was really little social opposition to his reign itself [7 p24; 20]. After Cnute's death in 1035, his empire collapsed and his son Harold Harefoot took the English crown with Saxon and Mercian support [7 p25; 20]. Harold died in 1040, and after this brief period of Danish rule, the throne returned to the West Saxon rulers under Edward, another son of Ethelred [20; 39; 40].

Edward's reclamation of the English throne actually brought more lasting change than Danish rule had, both during his reign and especially after [7 p24-26; 20; 39]. Edward, crowned in 1043, had been raised in Normandy and was the grandson of Duke Richard II of Normandy through his mother [20; 39; 40]. During his rule, Edward -called The Confessor or the Saint for his support of the church and lack of offspring- began to tie England's aristocratic culture to the continent: specifically to Normandy [7 p35-36; 20; 39]. One manifestation of both his support for the church and his Norman heritage was the beginning of a movement to rebuild English cathedrals in the Romanesque architectural style, mirroring the recent trend in northern France [7 p35-36]. While a minor change, this physical symbol accompanied strengthening ties to Roman authority and foretold a future shift of the church's ecclesiastical structure under the Norman rule

[7 p29, 35-36; 39]. A more controversial continental connection cultivated by the king was his attempt to bring Norman aristocrats into the English court, a move which enraged the native English nobles, including his influential father-in law, Earl Godwin [7 p25; 20; 39]. Earl Godwin presided over a significant portion of the English state, including all of Wessex, and together with his son Harold, presented such a threat to Edward's rule that Edward was forced to capitulate to the demands of the English nobles [7 p25; 20; 39]. Edward, having first tried to exile the Godwin family (including Edward's own wife), was made to reinstate them and expel his Norman favorites instead [7 p25; 39].

After the death of Earl Godwin, his son Harold became the most powerful figure in England, and though he was considered by some to be Edward's right hand man, he was truly the strength behind the throne and even responsible for subjugating Wales briefly in 1063 [20; 39]. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, when Edward named Harold his successor in 1065, it was because of Harold's strength and integrity in holding the kingdom together, and Harold himself would not have presumed to inherit the throne [20]. Though the last claim by the Chronicle seems unlikely, Edward's motives ring true given the political setting [20; 39]. Unfortunately for Harold, after Edward's death and his ascension in 1066, it was not just internal foes with whom he had to contest [18 p107; 20]. Immediately after being declared king by the great council of England, Harold took an army to chase down and gain his rebellious brother's submission, then marched north to defeat a Norse invasion [7 p25; 20; 39]. Harold had also prepared for a Norman invasion, but because sailing conditions delayed the Norman fleet, the English army had already moved up north by the time William, Duke of Normandy, arrived [7 p25-26; 20].

William claimed to be heir to the English throne by lineage through Edward's mother, and also claimed that Edward had made him heir some ten years prior and that Harold and other nobles had gathered to acknowledge this claim[22 p1-9; 41]. Whether William's many assertions were true or held any grain of truth is debated by historians to this day, as Anglo-Saxon sources are in direct conflict with or simply omit mention of any of these events [7; 20; 22]. Regardless of the veracity of William's statements or Harold's counter-claims, it was William's story that gained papal and continental support and would eventually triumph [7 p25-35; 20; 22; 39]. Upon arriving in England, William fought his way north, facing minimal resistance until he reached Hastings, where he built a fortification and finally came to fight Harold's army [20; 41]. During the battle, the English advantage was taken away when Harold was killed [18 p108; 20]. As other English leaders fell, their army fell to chaos and was defeated, leaving the way open for William to advance to London and take the crown [7 p25-26; 20; 22 p20-22; 41]. William's coronation took place on Christmas of 1066, the ceremony detailed by the account of Orderic Vitalis, whose sources were second-hand but who lived through the decades directly following William's ascension [20; 22 p20-22; 42]. Orderic's *Historia Ecclesiastica* describes how the commotion from the coronation startled the guards, who began setting fire to nearby buildings, so that the congregation of Normans then rushed out, some to douse the fires and others to loot the buildings [22 p20-21; 42]. While Orderic himself refers to the Normans in a favorable light, he also states that the chaos and destruction of the event meant that "the English... Never again trusted the Normans... But nursed their anger and bided their time to take revenge" [42].

The Norman Conquest took another 30 years to complete due to uprisings and revolts by the northern English, who were backed by the Scottish and Danes, though intermittently [7 p29;

22 p20-21]. The British natives of the south and east, true to their form during the Roman and Germanic conquests, were less stubborn in their defense, but did still resist Norman rule for a time [5 p48-50; 7 p31; 15; 18 p72]. A lack of consistency in the Danish support for England meant that the Normans did eventually take control, but resistance to Norman influence continued in Wales and Scotland over the next few centuries, the Celtic populations yet again showing their belligerent nature [7 p31, 36-39; 20]. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* describes the response to Norman armies in a manner astoundingly similar to Julius Caesar's description of the Celtic tactics a millennia prior: "But the Welsh always went before into the mountains and the moors, that no man could come to them." [20]. Many traits of the Celtic cultures continued to show themselves, just as they had in the era of Germanic England, and again the strongholds of Celtic lifestyles, languages, and oral and religious traditions were found in Wales and Scotland [7 p31, 61-63]. Though both regions slowly adapted some characteristics of the Norman influence, Scotland remained independent and not only formed its own unified kingdom, but became strong enough to invade Norman England on several occasions [7 p31-40, 60-63; 20]. Wales struggled to fight off the Norman rule for many decades beyond the conquest of England, and though they eventually succumbed, they maintained many of their Celtic customs [7 p31, 61-63].

So even as the Normans finally triumphed, it became evident that the conquest was still mainly military in nature, with a social recasting of the uppermost classes, but little change among the lifestyles of the majority- even in England [7 p28-30; 18 p108]. This lack of transformation was a part of William's plan, as he did what he could to maintain the peace by keeping the illusion of a natural progression into his rule [22 p9-21, 63]. In order to quell murmurs of rebellion, William reinforced his claim to be Edward's rightful heir by building his new laws and decrees by selecting pieces of existing legislation [22 p9-21]. Through this

process, William was able to create his murdrum fine, which stipulated severe social repercussions for the murder of Normans only, and in this fashion he redistributed lands in the Domesday book by labeling each parcel “TRE” [22 p5-6, 9, 63]. TRE, or Tempore Regis Edward, claimed that every division of land accounted for in the Domesday book, as well as its ownership, existed as it had in Edward’s time, though many of these possessions in Norman hands were of course doubtful [22 p63]. However, with an already effective government established, the continuity of institutions and systems of rule was usually honest [7 p24; 22 p9, 21].

As mentioned, however, the Britons did still resist Norman rule, joined by discontented Norman nobles, and William responded to each revolt by enforcing stricter and harsher penalties on the rebellious parties [7 p31; 20; 22 p5-6]. The first three Norman kings of England led by military might, and were more focused on keeping hold of the throne and their Norman subjects in check than bringing Norman culture to their new kingdom [7 p31; 20; 33 p856]. Local elites slowly assimilated just as their Norman lords did, out of necessity, but there was no overt attempt to incentivize this process as the Romans had Romanized the Celts [5 p48-52; 15; 7 p31]. The Norman lords cared more about land and profits than the people, and dynastic struggles disrupted any cultural transformation [7 p31-42; 20]. What change did occur was brought more as a means to suppress revolt, as the Norman conquest reinforced the feudal system, tying peasants to their land and limiting lower class mobility [7 p28-29; 22 p63]. However, while this evolution of the social hierarchy was significant, it was one that had its roots in the Anglo-Saxon era and would likely have occurred regardless of the ruling population [7 p30-31]. In fact, the basic premise of the system, a connection between lord and vassal in pledging military support in exchange for

service to the household, resembled that of the relationships between the Celtic Chieftains and their clans or villages [4; 5 p14; 7 p31].

The more pertinent change took place in the relation of this system to royal authority, whose reach William worked to lengthen and broaden [7 p33; 22 p11]. In this he strove for the same consolidation the Anglo-Saxon kings had searched for, which is to say, the goal common to most rulers of budding nations [3; 7 p19-20, 33; 20]. Unlike the earlier feudal state, the early historian Eadmer described the Norman's system as one in which "everything divine and human alike, waited on [the king's] nod" [22 p9]. In addition, royal activity increased in an attempt to stabilize the nation and reduce the power of the nobility while William's sons fought over the throne [7 p33-34]. Dynastic struggles and war over the Duchy in France were costly, which led to further development of the English system of taxation and the office of the Exchequer [7 p32-33]. As Henry, the youngest of William's sons, focused his efforts on Normandy and was often absent, Jeremy Black explains that "much of the governmental machinery of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy was continued" [7 p32-33]. This lack of the king's attention to British developments while royal activity pushed its traditional limits led to rebellions by upset or merely ambitious nobles throughout the Norman era [7 p31-34, 41-46]. Under the politically inefficient rule of King John, the royal attempts to tax a neglected England eventually sparked the revolt that would lead to the Magna Carta and restriction of royal powers with the development of Parliament [7 p48-49]. The next few kings of England regained some power and influence, but now Parliament stood as another major regulatory and legislative institution, another expansion of English government [p48-49].

Civil wars and the war of conquest also helped sustain the emphasis on the value of military in English society, contributing to a sort of vicious cycle whose co-conspirator was the feudal system [7 p34-40]. As in the previous eras, military obligation and fealty played a major role in the social structure of English society, and protection was the important societal and political link that made the feudal system function [7 p31-34]. The feudal system, then, resulted in a dependence of the lower classes on the upper classes in times of war, as they required protection [7 p31-34]. Wars, however, were extremely costly, meaning that the Norman nobility, who generally cared little for social support from their serfs, extracted as much produce and money as possible from their English subjects [7 p34]. By doing so, they further oppressed the lower classes, taking rights from freemen, who became like serfs, and making it impossible for the serfs to break free from their situation [7 p28]. With such discontent produced by the system, military might became a necessity tool for the small population of Norman elites to stay in power, and, as continued elsewhere in Europe, the collective use of force was the means for continued exploitation of peasant labor [33 p856; 35 p26-30].

One part of English culture which William did intentionally and effectively reconstruct was the English church, perhaps to acknowledge his support from the papacy throughout the conquest [7 p29, 34-36; 20; 22 p11]. As he moved through Britain in his initial conquest, William burned several of the existing churches, but not out of any disrespect for the dominant christian religion [7 p29; 20]. Instead, William followed by continuing Edward's work in rebuilding the cathedrals in the Romanesque style found in Normandy, then repopulated and reformed the clerical hierarchies [7 p33; 22 p11]. William worked to conform the ministerial English church to the parish and monastic systems found in Normandy, the latter being very much like that which

had formed the foundations for Celtic Christianity [3; 7 p29, 35; 21]. William and his successors also imported foreign clergy, almost entirely displacing the existing English clergy in the years following the conquest [22 p11; 33 p857]. New clergy members and even archbishops came from France and Italy, their strong ties to Rome contrasting with the independent English church that had been founded in Northumbria in the 600s [7 p11 29; 22 p11]. Reformation of the English church also gave another boost to the rejuvenation of a Judeo-Christian heritage and moral agenda that had begun as the Anglo-Saxon nation finally settled [7 p35]. With the church and nobility reconnecting with the continent, Latin emerged again to replace Old English in official and clerical documents- an immediate, if understated, indicator of the effect the Norman conquest would have on the English language [7 p29].

For nearly two hundred years following the conquest, French became the language of the upper classes, as the English gentry and clergy were now replaced by Normans [7 p36; 18 p111-117]. Intermarriage, social and economic interactions, and the need to communicate with their liege-lords led many higher-class Saxon English to learn French as well, so that the language division became social rather than ethnic [18 p111]. However, the language of the masses remained English, and for practical reasons, it seems likely that many of the Norman nobles learned the local tongue [18 p111, 114]. The prime example of this was William I who struggled valiantly to gain proficiency in English in order to further his claims of legitimacy and continuity with the previous rulers [p114]. Yet there remained also some important reasons for the use of French among the Norman nobility even as they settled in England, foremost of which being the duality of their estates, as most still held their lands and connections in France [7 p42-43; 18 p112-113]. Thus court literature was in French or Latin, and latin-based vocabulary

seeped into use among all classes of England [18 p163-167]. By the time conflict with the French king led the nobility to break with their French lands and language, Norman influence had already greatly accelerated the erosion and transformation of the Germanic Old English language, so that the English tongue that was readopted was barely recognizable [18 p129-140, 154-169].

Considering this, it may seem surprising that modern English remains in the family of Germanic languages, rather than the Romantic, but this is because the transformation sped up by the Norman influence was not solely due to the introduction of new vocabulary and did not borrow very much grammatically from French [18 p154-160]. The language brought by the Norman elites led to the adoption of extensive French vocabulary regarding fashion and social life, as well as the sciences, arts, and education [p166-169]. English words related to government, the law, and ecclesiastic administration also have their origins in French [p163-167]. However, English spoken by the masses was already separating from its Germanic relatives grammatically as inflectional endings and masculine and feminine forms of words were losing use for the sake of simplicity [p154-157]. The introduction of French to replace the Germanic language in most documents meant that written language could no longer be used to preserve what was changing in speech [p154-155]. However, English still relied on Germanic structures, and though most vocabulary was lost, what remained of vocabulary were the words most commonly used and integral to common speech [p53-54]. Thus the languages of Britain reflect the manner of the continuity of culture on the island, for while the ethnicity of the prominent ruling classes changed, the base of the population remained the same and kept their culture and lifestyle, albeit with new coverings [1; 18; 22; 33].

Many surface traits of English were changed in the two hundred years of Norman influence, but the integral base of the language could not be erased, and that endurance is even more evident in the rich culture and society of England and Britain as a whole. The geographical and resulting cultural splits of the island into three nations survive even until today, though the island presents a paradox of a united and yet separate coalition of the three regions, just as the histories and cultures of the island of are distinct in their origins but now inextricably intertwined.

The period of the Norman Conquest led to many developments in the means of administration of Britain, the feudal system and relationship between classes, the focus of the religious institutions, and the language of England. The English government under royal authority continued to grow and expand upon its Anglo-Saxon roots, implementing new tools and institutions to more effectively control and direct the nation. Meanwhile the struggle between royal authority and the strength of nobility continued, leading to civil wars and even more expansion of government in order to regulate the conflict and redistribute power as under Parliament. Rule under each noble's purvey also developed with the growth of the feudal and manorial systems that the Anglo-Saxons had created. Peasants and serfs lost many freedoms under a stricter yoke of obligations, enforced by the military leverage of the upper classes. William and his successors also remodeled the English church during their reigns, shifting its focus to follow Norman practices and connecting it closer to Rome by installing clergy from the continent. Finally, the Norman influence completely changed the English language, first by replacing it with French among the upper classes, then by leaving it full of new vocabulary as it

regained prominence. Norman rule had a major influence on the British and especially English culture, adding a great deal to the already rich identity of the island's people.

Conclusion

The Norman period of British history lasted only a couple centuries before coming to a violent end with the Hundred Years War. Yet while it lasted, it brought England a new line of nobles and kings, many ties to the continent, the Anglo-Norman language, and many other cultural developments that would help shape the identity of the English. For this reason, numerous scholars give it immense weight in interpreting British history, and many consider its inception in 1066 to be the starting point for the formations of the English state, identity, and modern culture. However, for all its importance, William the Conqueror's invasion in 1066 was far from a monolithic event in Britain's history or her people's identity, and certainly not the beginning of the development of modern England. Rather, it and the changes brought by the ensuing conquest were part of another progressive shift, though a major one, in a much older and richer history of development. English culture has roots dating back to the Pre-Celtic peoples of Britain, and continued to develop through the Celtic, Roman, and Germanic ages before the Normans arrived. Each period impacted the social and cultural base of the British people and their identities, so that English culture is more a development of a conglomeration of diverse cultures than of a single influence.

The concentrations of British populations and characteristic lifestyles in different regions of Britain trace back far beyond any written accounts, into an era before even the Celts arrived on the island [1; 5; 7 p1-5; 23; 24]. Climate and geographical features of the island determined where agricultural activity would be pursued, and what forms it would take [2; 7 p1-2; 28]. The geographical concentrations of wealth and trade have largely remained the same, dictated by the availability of natural resources, which also led to an early separation between the modern

regions of England, Scotland, and Wales [2; 4; 7 p1-2; 9]. Availability of natural resources also translated into the ease and types of settlement found in each locale, and eventually characterized the formation of economic and governing systems as well [2; 5 p18, 28; 7 p2]. Topographical features of the island furthered the divide between Scotland and Wales and the lower lying region that became England, and would help preserve early cultures against the waves of invaders that came to Britain throughout the ages [4; 28].

The first major cultural group of invaders which came to Britain was the Celtic people who had originated in the Rhine Valley [1; 5 p8-15]. While in some cases the Celts came as traders and settlers, they were mostly true invaders, and brought their roaming, warring lifestyle and militaristic culture with them [2; 5 p8-14; 9]. Celtic society focused on trade, war, and the tribe, though the Celts in Britain were by no means a simple people [5; 13]. The Celts introduced their advanced mining and metalwork techniques to Britain, and their trade routes extended the breadth of the ancient world to bring luxuries from Greece, Iberia, and even the Chinese silk road to British chieftains [5 p16-18, 30-32, 50; 11; 13]. As the Celtic culture developed in Britain since their arrival around the sixth century B.C.E., they overwhelmed the native languages and mythology with their own vibrant religious and oral traditions [2; 5 p12-13, 120-127; 9; 11]. The Celts eventually settled into towns or hill forts and a more agrarian existence in the south and east of Britain, following the pattern set by Pre-Celtic peoples [7 p1-5; 5 p16-18]. Though even in what would be relatively peaceful times and a calmer region, the clans fought amongst themselves and maintained some emphasis on military strength in their societies [5 p50-51; 8; 9; 15]. The fierce vigor of Celtic clan warfare, as well as their proclivity towards a wandering existence, was even more evident in the Welsh and Scottish peoples, lasting for more than two

millennia after their migration to Britain [2; 3; 5 p155; 7 p7]. In Wales and Scotland, the preservation of Celtic culture was remarkably pure throughout the Roman, Saxon, and Norman conquests, again likely influenced by the natural barriers of the island, and because of this, Celtic culture continued to influence the development of the English identity as well [2; 4; 6 p3-8; 7 p4-5; 20].

Roman rule over Britain began soon after Emperor Claudius set his sights upon the island in the first century A.D. [2; 188 p44]. Though the Celts fought fiercely, the superior resources and discipline of the Roman armies granted them victory over the wealthy British region which would eventually become England [5 p96-99; 7 p5; 30]. Revolts and the guerilla tactics used by the Celts kept the Romans from dominating the northern and western regions of the island, and forced Rome to maintain a military presence in Britain [5 p96-101; 15; 30]. Roman rule pacified the people of England, and continued to bring the island trade, though now focused inside the empire [2; 15; 30]. Southern British settlements began to style themselves after Roman towns as the legionnaires made homes for themselves in the empire's northern frontier [7 p5;19; 30]. Roman coinage, town centers, and even theaters appeared, and the Latin tongue was introduced as the first written language in Britain [7 p5; 18 p44-45]. The speed of which the southern Celts and natives adopted the Roman customs was remarkable, due to a peaceful appeal by the Romans which allowed native leaders to remain in power while joining Roman society [7 p4-6; 15; 30]. This adoption of a settled Roman culture furthered the divide between the regions of Britain which would become England, Scotland, and Wales, building on the natural geographical divisions [3; 4; 7 p1-5]. Roman mythology and religion were not initially as quick to catch on as the luxurious Roman lifestyle, but then Christianity came to Britain through the empire, and

firmly entrenched itself [5 p121; 21]. Christian influence spread and joined with some Celtic customs during the Roman era, allowing it to endure even after Roman influence receded [3; 19; 21].

Attacks on other borders forced Rome to withdraw its armies from Britain in the 5th century, leaving Roman England to the mercy of the Celts as well as raids from Germanic tribes [5 p114-116; 7 p5-6; 21]. The now largely pacified peoples of the south actually invited the Germanic Jutes, Saxons, and Angles to the island to combat a Pictish Celtic invasion from the north, and the Germanic tribes then took over England themselves [3; 20; 21]. Unlike the Romans, who had mixed in with the British people after assuming control, the Germanic tribes displaced the locals and forced them to flee to the west of the island [7 p7; 20; 21]. The Germanic tribes were split into Northumbrians, Mercians, Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, who fought over territories which stretched up to the edge of modern Scotland and out west to what would become Wales [6 p8-12; 20]. Thus the boundaries of the regions were again defined as they had been in Roman times and even earlier by the lifestyles of the natives [2; 4; 7 p1-9]. The Germanic tribes wiped out most traces of earlier cultures in their colonization of England, leaving only a few cities and adopting little of the Roman culture other than a more settled lifestyle [7 p12-15; 20]. Roman peoples did bring their culture west to what the Germanic tribes would name Wales, and their civilization as well as the Celtic influence would later seep back into England [3; 4; 7 p7-15; 18 p49].

Germanic peoples brought their language, legends, and a more belligerent culture back to southeastern Britain, but their institutional developments beginning in the late 8th century may have had the largest lasting impact on England [7 p20-31; 20; 21; 22 p9, 63]. Early on the

Germanic presence meant a decline from the standards of living and concentration of civilization found in Roman times, as well as most trade and communication with the continent [5 p50-51; 7 p12-16; 20]. However, the warring tribes eventually united after a long process of conquest by the West Saxons [6 p8; 20]. As each Germanic kingdom rose in fell during the conflict, it left new institutional concept and developments- such as judicial systems -which were adopted by the next dominant tribe [7 p20; 20]. Eventually the shire system of splitting districts for adjudication and governance was established, and a manorial system evolved out of the rural farming economies [7 p14-20; 34]. Social classes became clearly defined and far more unequal than before, with serfs at the bottom of the ladder and tied to their lands in exchange for military protection or due to military coercion [7 p14-15; 35 p26-31]. It was the Germanic social system in England and its system of governance which were later taken over by the Danish and Normans, and the Saxon institutions were truly the foundation for all of the later English governments [7 p14-35; 20; 22 p20-21]. The English language also began from the tongues of the Angles and Saxons, and a resurgence of Christianity in the Celtic regions of Britain also brought the religion to prominence in England during the German period [3; 4; 18 p45-67; 21].

At the beginning of the second millennium, Danish fleets took over England for a brief time, but changed little during their short rule, merely setting the stage for the Norman conquest and period of dominance [7 p24-25; 20]. Norman influence actually reached England half a century before William the Conqueror, as the Saxon king displaced by the Danes fled to France and married there, establishing ties between his royal house and the Norman duchy [20; 39; 40]. His son, Edward the Confessor, who returned after the Danish left, brought Norman customs and nobles to England with him, setting a precedent which William used to justify his claim to the

English throne [20; 39]. Edward established a stronger connection to the continent, which William solidified when he claimed the throne in the turmoil of invasions following Edward's death [7 p25-26; 20]. William declared himself the natural successor of Edward's line, and his attempts to maintain this image meant that changes to the English administrative system and culture were relatively restrained [7 p24; 22 p5-21]. William still faced strong resistance and numerous revolts in his conquest, especially in stretching to the perpetually contested northern and western borders of England [7 p31; 20]. The costly military rule required to suppress these revolts led to further discontent among both nobles and the lower classes, so that the nobles were replaced by Norman compatriots and the lower classes were more harshly constrained by the feudal system [7 p31-40; 22 p11; 35 p26-30].

William reformed and rebuilt the Christian church in England along Norman standards, and the Conquest also resulted in a social shift of noble attentions towards the continent and a new language as well [7 p29-43; 18 p111-114, 129-140; 20]. Norman and English church sensibilities clashed, and so William and his successors found it simpler to replace the English clergy with those from France or Italy, bringing the church closer to the papal seat in Rome [7 p29-36; 22 p11]. The same was true of the nobility in many cases, so Normans who assisted in the conquest were granted estates in England, but still considered themselves French or Normans first [7 p31-42; 22 p5-6]. Thus these landholders with dual estates brought their court fashion, customs, literature, and language to England, the last of which spread throughout the upper class English until much of their vocabulary was based in French [18 p111-114, 163-167; 33 p857]. The Norman Conquest brought many changes to England, but the remnants of earlier cultures

lived on hidden within English society and especially elsewhere on the isle [5 p121-126; 7 p1-5, 20-43; 18 p45-67; 20; 22 p5-21, 63].

And so it is not only important to realize that Norman influence in England began before the Conquest, but that the assumption that Anglo-Norman culture was one of the earliest to influence the English identity ignores a multitude of diverse peoples and influences that proceeded both the Normans and the Anglo-Saxons they displaced. For the Norman Conquest to be considered a decisive beginning in English history, some historians imply that it was an ending to the Anglo-Saxon influence and way of life, which in turn put an end to the earlier Roman manifestation of Britain, et cetera. As demonstrated in this paper, there is far more to be considered in creating a cohesive picture of British history. Because while history can be split into individual periods for the sake of study, those breaks in the continuity of culture are constructs which were not nearly so evident in the ages as they actually occurred. Pre-Celtic conditions, Celtic peoples, Romans, Anglo Saxons, and Normans all had an influence on their contemporary English cultures, but to truly understand the origins of the English identity, one must also recognize how the impact of each period would endure throughout subsequent ages.

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